An Empirical Investigation of Brand-Building Factors in Management Institutes from the Employers' Perspective

Synopsis of the Research Proposal Submitted for the Registration in the

Ph.D. Programme in Management

By

Archana Verma

(Enrollment No. 25JPPHNDMS005)

Under Supervision of

Dr. Archana Rathore

Dean

ICFAI Business School

The ICFAI University, Jaipur

An Empirical Investigation of Brand-Building Factors in Management Institutes from the Employers' Perspective

Synopsis of the Research Proposal Submitted for the Registration in the

Ph.D. Programme in Management

By

Archana Verma

(Enrollment No. 25JPPHNDMS005)

Under Supervision of

Dr. Archana Rathore

Dean

Archana Verma
Research Scholar

Dr. Archana Rathore
Supervisor

ICFAI Business School

The ICFAI University, Jaipur

List of Contents

Sr. No.	Contents	Page No.
1	List of Abbreviations	1
2	Abstract	2
3	Introduction	3
4	Review of Literature	4
5	Research Gap	7
6	Statement of the Problem	7
7	Significance of the Study	8
8	Research Questions	9
9	Research Objectives	10
10	Research Hypothesis	10
11	Research Methodology	11
12	Scope of the Study	18
13	Limitations of the Study	19
14	Expected Outcomes of the Study	19
15	Research Timeline	20
15	References	20

List of Abbreviations

HR	Human Resource
IT	Information Technology
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structures
MS Excel	Microsoft Excel
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
PLS	Partial Least Squares
EBI	Employer Brand Image
SLR	Systematic Literature Review
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions

Abstract

This study explores the important aspects of brand-building by management institutes, in the light of employer's perspective. The brand image of the institution is has today become a perceived image of the quality of management graduates, their industry orientation and the perception formed by the stakeholders. This study proposes an empirical investigation of five principal independent variables—Placement Record and Industry Linkages, Faculty Quality and Research Output, Curriculum Design and Pedagogy, Institutional Reputation and Accreditation, and Infrastructure and Campus Environment—and their influence on the dependent variable of Employer-Perceived Brand Equity. The research will involve collection of primary data using structured open-ended questionnaire, which will be administered across 300 plus employers, recruiters, and the HR professionals in Indian metro cities. The study will use statistical tools like mean, standard deviation, correlation and regression analysis to analyse the relation between variables and to test the hypotheses introduced. The results are likely to show that the curriculum design & pedagogy, student employability, placement performance, quality of faculty, industry interface, institutional reputation & visibility, alumni strength, infrastructure & learning environment, governance & institutional credibility, placement support and admission process, play a significant part in institutional brand equity and affect the choice of recruits. Also, moderating factors like industry/sector of the recruiter, organisation size and geographic spread, influence the relationship between key factors and Brand Image of the management institute. The study aims to classify the most influential brand determinants from the employer perspective, thus filling the research gap in management education branding. This will help to provide actionable recommendations for the institutes, accreditation/ranking bodies and policymakers. Based on the findings from the research, practical strategies with a brand scorecard tool will be suggested to improve institutional brand value, aiming to help benchmark and monitor brand image with respect to industry expectations.

Keywords: Brand Image, Management Institutes, Employer Perception, Higher Education, Brand Building, Brand Equity, Recruitment

1. Introduction

The management education sector in India has seen unprecedented growth. According to AICTE 2024, 5,500 institutions currently offer MBA and PGDM programmes. As a result, more than 3.5 lakh graduates are being produced annually. This is a hyper-competitive setting. The brand image of management institute has today become a very important & strategic asset.

A vital stakeholder group in the higher education system are recruiters. Their perceptions and hiring preferences/choices directly influence employability results for management school graduates. This influences the reputation of management institution significantly. The factors influencing brand of an institute from employers' perspective is not explored adequately in Indian context. Most such studies concentrate on perception of students, website information of institutes and their respective rankings/accreditations. An employer-centric systematic mapping of the key influencing brand factors has not been studied substantially.

This study examines the key drivers that influence employer's perception of management institutes as superior talent sources or preferred recruitment destinations.

The skills-based hiring is rapidly on the rise, the digitally transformed businesses and evolving accreditation frameworks (NIRF, NAAC, AACSB) have transformed employer expectations from management pass outs. For better policy and practice, understanding this shift and aligning it with institutional branding is essential.

This study engages a multi-layered conceptual model which blends placement outcomes, faculty calibre, industry aligned curriculum, accreditation/ranking, and infrastructure (physical and digital) as brand influencing factors, which are to be tested for influence on employer-perceived brand equity outcomes. The research aims to provide an empirical roadmap to all stakeholders to strategically align recruiter's perspective with branding, policy and hiring decisions.

2. Review of Literature

The application of brand management principles to higher education institutions gained thrust in the later part of 1990s. Contributions from **Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993)** laid the conceptual groundwork for this. Aaker's brand equity model encompassed brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality and brand associations. This model has been adapted extensively in the higher education field **(Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006; Chapleo, 2015)**.

Whisman (2009) and Lowrie (2007), argued that universities increasingly operate in market-like environments. Here branding aids like a differentiator in attracting students, faculty and partnerships with recruiters for the institute.

With respect to India, **Rao and Wadhwa (2023)** studied how national institutional rankings (NIRF) and NAAC accreditation grades operate as brand signals. This was studied particularly for first-generation college students and recruiters without a direct experience or exposure with a management school. They conducted a multi-group analysis. This analysis found that the recruiter's familiarity with a management institution operates as a moderator for the relationship between his hiring decisions and accreditation signals.

Moroko and Uncles (2008) studied the perspective of employer branding & talent acquisition strategy. They found that employers use institute's reputation as a screening parameter. Institutions seeming to provide quality indicators attract more candidate selections.

Srivastava and Bhatnagar (2023) took this forward to the Indian B-school context. They confirmed that employers use a graded set of indicators. These indicators include placement statistics, faculty profiles, national rankings and alumni networks, which may also be seen as substitutes for the quality of the graduate.

Singh et al. (2022) and Kaur and Nanda (2022) established that strongest employer preference drivers are placement outcomes like salary packages and recruiter diversity. They also bring forth that softer attributes like campus culture and alumni engagement are also significant contributors.

Verma and Kapoor (2021) mentioned that the sectoral diversity of recruiting organizations was a more reliable brand signal than average salary. It indicated the vastness of the curriculum.

Jain et al. (2023) examined employer experiences with interns. They found that internship quality evaluations had a high correlation with subsequent full-time hiring, happening from the

respective management institution. This found a feedback loop between the Institute's brand image and the employer engagement during the internship phase.

In literature related to higher education, faculty qualifications and research have proved to be key factors of brand equity of a management institute. **Gupta and Srivastava (2022)** mention that the number of PhD-qualified faculty creates a perception of academic rigour at the institute. Research by faculty published in SCOPUS-indexed or other reputed publications, largely affects brand image of the management institution. **Bhattacharya and Das (2023)** recognised faculty research and thought leadership as key factors This reiterated that sectors that are knowledge-intensive, greatly value thought leadership. **Mishra and Tiwari (2023)** established that the industry experience of the faculty is positively related to employer perception about graduate's readiness for corporate.

Ganganwar, Y. B., & Singh, P. (2021) investigated the effectiveness of industry-institute interaction program as a means to enhance institutional-industry linkage by B-Schools in Pune especially alumni participation. It was found that alumni performed a critical mediating role, which improved collaboration and employability results and institutional visibility in a very competitive environment. The long term and systematized interaction with alumni and industry stakeholders have a large role to play in institutional development, relevance and brand positioning, especially with globalization and mounting pressure on higher education systems.

Agarwal and Mehta (2022) found substantial misalignment between curriculum offerings and emerging employer demands, specifically in fields like artificial intelligence, digital transformation and data analytics. Their findings echo with the AICTE National Employability Report (2023), which stressed that over 60% of surveyed employers considered management graduates insufficiently prepared for roles that need data-driven decision-making.

Bhat and Singh (2023) mentioned that institutes that incorporate experiential learning like live projects, hackathons, business simulations, etc. are rated higher in terms of employer brand perception scores.

Kumar and Pandey (2024) noted that curriculum integration (digital and analytics) was one of the top three employer-cited differentiating factors that affect the selection of a management institute for campus hiring.

Wulyatiningsih, T., & Mandagi, D. W. (2023) studied the factors that are the base of strategic brand management in institutions. Four essential elements were identified - strategic partnerships with industry and alumni members, ongoing improvement and innovation

initiatives, community engagement and public relations and the scope of out of ordinary experiences for students, faculty and staff members. These factors were found to be very significant for institutional reputation &competitiveness. They also found that overall and dynamic branding strategy is important to create long-term value in the education industry.

Romero (2022) and Fragueiro and Thomas (2011) say that international accreditation (AACSB, EQUIS, AMBA) is an important influencer in global employer market. Accredited management institutes are preferred by recruiters. **Shankar and Pillai (2023)** studied the Indian context of this aspect. They found that NIRF rankings shape employer perceptions of institution's brand more than only NAAC accreditation. Institutions which have both NAAC 'A++' status and top-50 NIRF ranking are preferred most by employers. **Saxena and Batra (2023)** developed and validated EBPI (Employer Brand Perception Index) focusing on Indian management institutes. Against established brand equity scales, they established EBPIs reliability and validity.

Campus infrastructure has also been seen as an influencer for institutional brand image, however, is under investigated. The facilities provided at campus have a significant effect on both student outcomes and the employer experience, while conducting recruitment drives at campus. **Kumar and Anand (2022)** mentioned that the campus recruitment infrastructure is seen as a significant factor by the employers. This contributes to institutional brand impression and includes dedicated placement cells/teams, professional venues for the process, pre-placement talk facilities etc.

Nambisan et al. (2023) say that the incubation ecosystems are becoming important**.** He mentions that institutes with active startup incubators were associated with innovation and entrepreneurial capacity.

Khanna, K., et al., (2024) analysed the comparative impact of branding antecedents on different elements of brand management within the framework of higher education institutions (HEIs). It was found that most important antecedents were competence and service quality. Brand image was highly affected by heritage, whereas brand identity was affected by service quality and competence. The research was able to conclude that an inside-out approach to branding was more advantageous to the HEIs compared to the traditional way of viewing it as outside-in.

Sreeramulu, D. (2025) studied the effects of branding in institutions of higher learning. The study explained that strategic branding was effective mostly in the focus areas (institutional

visibility, enrolment, funding, stakeholder engagement). However, they do not remain consistent. Powerful branding was connected to competitive advantage and sustainability.

3. Research Gap

Employer branding and brand-building of institutes have been researched and literature is available. These studies primarily focus on employee's perception in the corporate environment or the overall branding mechanisms in the management institutions. These studies do not include and explore the attribute of the employer in assessing & shortlisting the management institutes for hiring. Most studies revolve around individual brand-building factors that are examined separately. They have not been studied as a multi-dimensional model. Majority of empirical studies (including the scale development studies) are confined to only specific industries like IT. They therefore do not represent the employer expectations across industries. In the context of India specifically, the employer expectations across segments (sector, organization size, geographic spread etc) have not been explored widely. Rigorous validated models have not been framed to study the association of the brand antecedents and institutional reputation with brand equity of the management institute, through the recruiter's perspective. Organisational characteristics, which may have a moderating role in the relationship between the key factors that affect the brand of the Management Institute and the brand image of the management institute, have been less explored.

4. Present study

4.1 Statement of the Problem

In the ever-competitive environment of higher education, management institutes have been facing an increasing pressure to build and maintain a good institutional brand that translates to the main stakeholders, especially the employers. The current available literature is primarily focused on branding through the perspective of the student and the management institution. However, limited literature studies the brand-building factors from recruiter's perspective.

Recruiters have a crucial role in establishing the quality of the management institution in the context of hiring. However, key factors of their perception have not studied in combination. There is very dynamic relationship between the ever-changing expectations of the recruiters and the academic delivery of the management institute. This is another challenge for the management institutes. An organized analysis of the employer perceived brand-building factors is very much needed. This will help to improve the institutional relevance, credibility and also the institute's long-term competitive positioning. In today's education environment, it is very important to explore and develop an empirical model which is.

- Validated
- multi-factor
- describes the various key factors that influence brand-building of the management institutes
- lists the factors that have the most influence on the employer-perceived brand image

This study examines key factors that most strongly influence the employer-perceived brand image of a management institute. It also studies the effect of organisational characteristics on the relationship.

4.2 Significance of the Study

The research has a considerable theoretical and practical implication in the progress of the discussion surrounding branding in higher education as it will consider the employer as one of the main evaluative prisms. In theory, it advances the available literature by conceptualizing the idea of brand-building as a multidimensional framework that is based on employability outcomes, institutional reputation, industry-institute collaboration and other key factors. In practice, the results can help management institutes balance their curricula, pedagogical models and industry engagement programs with expectations of employers strategically, as it increases graduate employability and institutional brand equity. Also, the research will be informative to administrators and leaders in higher learning institutions in the design of education systems responsive to the industry. The research can help to make more informed decisions by closing the academic-industrial gap, which will eventually result in sustainable institutional growth and increased trust in employers. It can confirm quality dimensions that are greatly valued by employers, which policymakers and accreditation bodies can draw from. It will provide

employers a structured framework to evaluate and compare management institutes as talent sources.

4.3 Research Questions

1. How does Curriculum Design & Pedagogy influence the employer-perceived Brand image of Management Institutes?
2. How does Student Employability influence the employer-perceived Brand image of Management Institutes?
3. How does Placement Performance influence the employer-perceived Brand image of Management Institutes?
4. How does Quality of faculty influence the employer-perceived Brand image of Management Institutes?
5. How does Industry Interface influence the employer-perceived Brand image of Management Institutes?
6. How does Institutional Reputation & Visibility influence the employer-perceived Brand image of Management Institutes?
7. How does Alumni Strength influence the employer-perceived Brand image of Management Institutes?
8. How does Infrastructure & Learning Environment influence the employer-perceived Brand image of Management Institutes?
9. How does Governance & Institutional Credibility influence the employer-perceived Brand image of Management Institutes?
10. How does Placement support influence the employer-perceived Brand image of Management Institutes?
11. How does Admission Process influence the employer-perceived Brand image of Management Institutes?
12. How is the relationship between brand-building factors and employer-perceived Brand image of Management Institutes, moderated by the Industry/Sector of the recruiter?
13. How is the relationship between brand-building factors and employer-perceived brand image of Management Institutes, moderated by the Size of the recruiter's Organisation?
14. How is the relationship between brand-building factors and employer-perceived brand image of Management Institutes, moderated by the Geographic Spread of the recruiter?

4.4 Research Objectives

1. To identify the key brand-building factors of management institutes as perceived by employers.
2. To analyse the influence of the key factors on the brand image of management institutes in the eyes of recruiters.
3. To evaluate the impact of moderating variables on relationship between key factors and brand image of management institutes.
4. To propose a comprehensive, validated Brand Equity Model for management institutes from the employer's perspective.
5. To suggest strategies for strengthening brand value of management institutes based on employer expectations.

4.5 Research Hypothesis

H1: Curriculum Design & Pedagogy have a significant influence on employer-perceived brand image of Management Institutes.

H2: Employer-perceived brand image of Management Institutes is significantly impacted by student employability.

H3: Employer-perceived brand image of Management Institutes is significantly impacted by Placement Performance.

H4: Employer-perceived brand image of management institutes is significantly impacted by quality of faculty.

H5: Employer-perceived brand image of Management Institutes is significantly impacted by industry interface.

H6: Institutional reputation & visibility significantly affect employer-perceived brand image of Management Institutes.

H7: Alumni strength significantly affects employer-perceived brand image of Management Institutes.

H8: Environment and infrastructure significantly affect employer-perceived brand image of Management Institutes.

H9: Governance & institutional credibility significantly affect employer-perceived brand image of Management Institutes.

H10: Placement support significantly affects employer-perceived brand image of Management Institutes.

H11: Admission process significantly affects employer-perceived brand image of Management Institutes.

H12: Industry/Sector of the recruiter impacts the relationship between brand-building factors and employer-perceived brand image of management institutes.

H13: Organisation size of the recruiter impacts the relationship between brand-building factors and employer-perceived brand image of management institutes.

H14: Geographic Spread of the recruiter impacts the relationship between brand-building factors and employer-perceived brand image of management institutes.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Method Adopted:

The research will adopt quantitative approach and will undertake a systematic study of the brand-building aspects of management institutes in the perspective of the employers. Primary data will be obtained from the employers by using structured questionnaires whose variables will include key factors like alumni reputation, student quality, institutional image, preferences etc. To test the hypotheses formulated, statistical tools and techniques such as correlation and regression analysis will be used. The results will be useful in determining meaningful correlation among variables and also in supporting the hypotheses put forth by the research. This will guarantee objectivity, reliability and generalization of the results.

5.2 Geography - Tier 1 cities in India:

The research will be conducted in Tier 1 cities in India (Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, Pune & Hyderabad). Recruiters based out of Satellite cities around these Tier 1 cities. will be included a part of the respective city.

List of Satellite cities around tier 1 cities in India

Delhi (NCR)	Mumbai (MMR)	Kolkata	Chennai	Bangalore	Pune	Hyderabad
Gurugram	Navi Mumbai	Salt Lake City (Bidhannagar)	Sriperumbudur	Electronic City	Pimpri-Chinchwad	Secunderabad
Noida	Thane	New Town	Oragadam	Whitefield	Talegaon Dabhade	Gachibowli
Greater Noida	Kalyan-Dombivli	Howrah	Chengalpattu	Devanahalli	Chakan	Madhapur
Faridabad	Panvel	Barasat	Avadi	Hoskote	Hinjewadi	Shamshabad
Ghaziabad	Vasai-Virar	Serampore	Tambaram			

Different industry employers will be sampled to obtain diverse points of view towards institutional branding. This scale will assist in coming up with more generalizable and trustworthy results.

5.3 Sample/Participants:

The target group of this study will include employers/recruiters (human resource managers, corporate professionals and graduates of management actively engaged in the process of recruiting and selection of management undergraduates). These respondents are selected since they may bring practical evidence on the factors affecting the brand image of management institutes. The individuals in different industries will be studied to have a broad knowledge on the employer perceptions. Their inputs will help in analysing of key determinants of branding like alumni reputation, the quality of students and institutional credibility, etc. The population will give significant and valid data to test the hypotheses put forward in this study.

5.4 Sampling Design

Stratified random sampling will be used in this study to offer sufficient representation of the various types of employers engaged in recruitment from management institutes. The employers will be sorted into relative strata according to the factors like industry/sector, size of organization and frequency of recruitment. Respondents will be chosen randomly to reduce bias and increase the accuracy of the findings, out of every stratum. The methodology will assist in the collection of the varying perceptions of the employers on the aspects of brand-

building, alumni reputation, and student quality. It will therefore give a better and balanced coverage with respect to the objectives and hypotheses of the study.

5.5 Research Design:

The study will adopt descriptive & analytical research design to systematically explore the brand-building factors of management institutes as observed by employers. To test the significance of the relationships between these variables, right statistical tools will be used to test the hypothesis.

- **Descriptive Research Design:** The descriptive research design will be applied to determine and provide an insight into the key variables, including alumni reputation, quality of students, accreditation and interaction with the industry.
- **Analytical Research Design:** The analytical research design will be used to define the connection among all variables and employer preferences in the recruitment process.

5.6 Data Collection:

The study will be based on both primary and secondary data. The blend of the two sources of data will help in comprehensive and qualitative analysis aligned with the research objectives and hypotheses.

5.6.1 Primary Data: The primary data is to be collected using structured questionnaires and surveys that will be administered to employers and recruiters currently engaged in hiring from management institutes.

5.6.2 Secondary Data: Secondary data is to be gathered with the help of literature that is already available (research journals, institutional reports, accreditation records and published articles about branding in higher learning institutions). Official websites of management institutes and industry reports will also supply the relevant information on the key factors and the reputation of the institutions.

5.6.3 Sample Size:

The research shall be conducted on a sample size of 450 respondents who include employers and recruiters engaged in hiring from management institutes. Appropriate

sampling technique will be used to identify the sample so that enough representation of various industries and organizational profiles. The information will be gathered using a structured questionnaire that will be developed according to the mentioned purposes and research hypotheses. Statistical tests like correlation, regression, and hypothesis testing will be carried out. It will assist in determining the major brand-building aspects and the connection between the institute brand image and employer preference. The results based on this sample will give the credible foundation in proposing the measures that could enhance the brand value of management institutes.

5.6.4 Ethical Considerations

Strict ethical standards will be observed while conducting the study to facilitate integrity, reliability and credibility of the process for research. The involvement of respondents will be voluntary. Before the data is collected, an informed consent will be taken from the participants. The respondents will be clearly made aware of the objective of the research. The anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents and the data will be upheld at all times. No data or details, personal or organizational, will be released without their permission, if need be. The data will be collected through a structured questionnaire. This information will be used for only academic purposes and will kept be free of manipulation/distortion of any sort. Any bias, any misleading information or any coercion, will not be used. All the responses will be recorded and will be analyzed with objectivity. To avoid plagiarism, for all the secondary sources the source reference will be correctly considered. To ensure transparency and academic integrity, ethics in research shall be observed.

5.7 Research Instruments:

The research instrument will be a structured open-ended questionnaire to gather quantitative data among the employers/recruiters. The questionnaire shall be structured into several questions which will be measured on Likert scale to gauge the perceptions of the management institute in the context of the key factors and brand image. Sections that match every objective and hypothesis of the research will be included to ensure that all the variables are covered. The tool will also be pre-tested to attain reliability and clarity of questions. The responses obtained through the questionnaire will be analysed statistically to explore the relationships and verify

the hypothesis. This method will assist in getting similar and consistent responses of the respondents.

5.8 Variables of the Study:

- **Independent Variables**

  The independent variables are curriculum design & pedagogy, student employability, placement performance, quality of faculty, industry interface, institutional reputation & visibility, alumni strength, infrastructure & learning environment, governance & institutional credibility, placement support and admission process. These variables have 41 sub-variables as listed in the table below.

- **Moderating Variables**

  Industry/sector of the recruiter, organisation size and geographic spread are moderating variables.

- **Dependent Variable**

  Brand image of management institutes is the dependent variable.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES		
1	Curriculum Design & Pedagogy	Industry-Aligned Curriculum
		Specialisation-number & relevance of electives
		Case-Based & Experiential Learning
		Global Exposure
		Digital & Analytics Integration
2	Student Employability	Technical skills
		Soft Skills & Leadership Development
		Problem-solving ability
		Industry readiness / job preparedness
3	Placement Performance	Placement rate
		Average/median salary packages
		Recruiter diversity
		Internship opportunities
4	Quality of faculty	Faculty Qualification

		Research Publications
		Industry Experience of Faculty
		Consulting & Executive Training
		Thought Leadership
5	Industry Interface	Corporate partnerships
		Alumni in industry
		Guest lectures & workshops by professionals
6	Institutional Reputation & Visibility	Rankings (national/international)
		Accreditations (NBA, AACSB, etc.)
		Social Media & Digital Presence
7	Alumni Strength	Alumni success in industry
		Alumni engagement
		Alumni in leadership roles
8	Infrastructure & Learning Environment	Campus facilities
		Technology adoption
		Learning resources
		Wellness & Student Support
		Incubation & Innovation Ecosystem
9	Governance & Institutional Credibility	Leadership quality
		Transparency
		Ethical practices
		Brand Heritage & Legacy
10	Placement support	dedicated placement cell
		Placement infrastructure
		Hospitality
11	Admission Process	admission cut offs
		Process discipline

MODERATING VARIABLES	
12	Industry/Sector of the recruiter
13	Organisation Size
14	Geographic Spread

DEPENDENT VARIABLE	
1	Brand image of Management Institutes

5.9 Conceptual framework

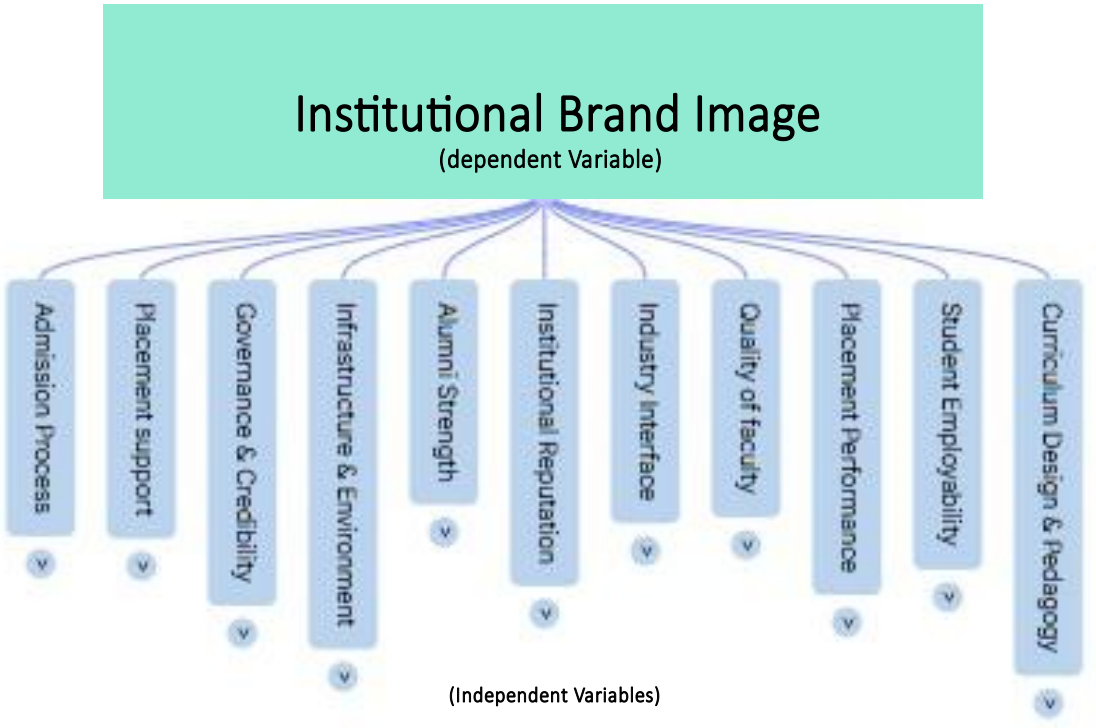


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study: Independent & dependent variables

Source: Prepared by the author

Figure 2: Conceptual framework of the study: Independent sub variables

Source: Prepared by the author

6. Scope of study

The aim of this study is to explore key brand-building factors for the management institutes, with point of view of employers in India being the focus. In order to analyse the influence of these factors on perceptions and recruitment decisions of the empolyer, key elements like alumni, quality of students, image of the institution, industry academia collaborations and others will be covered. This study focuses on employers/recruiters (HR professionals, corporate representatives actively involved in hiring from management institutes). This ensures corporates insights specific and relevant to the industry. A quantitative approach, which involves a structured questionnaire and statistical tools like correlation and regression, will be deployed to establish association between the variables. Tier 1 cities of India (including respective satellite cities) will be included. This will help to capture diverse viewpoints of the employers and make the results more comprehensive. The scope is limited to the selected variables only and may not study all probable factors that have an effect on the brand image of the management institute. It reflects employer perception only at a specific point in time, not over a period of time.

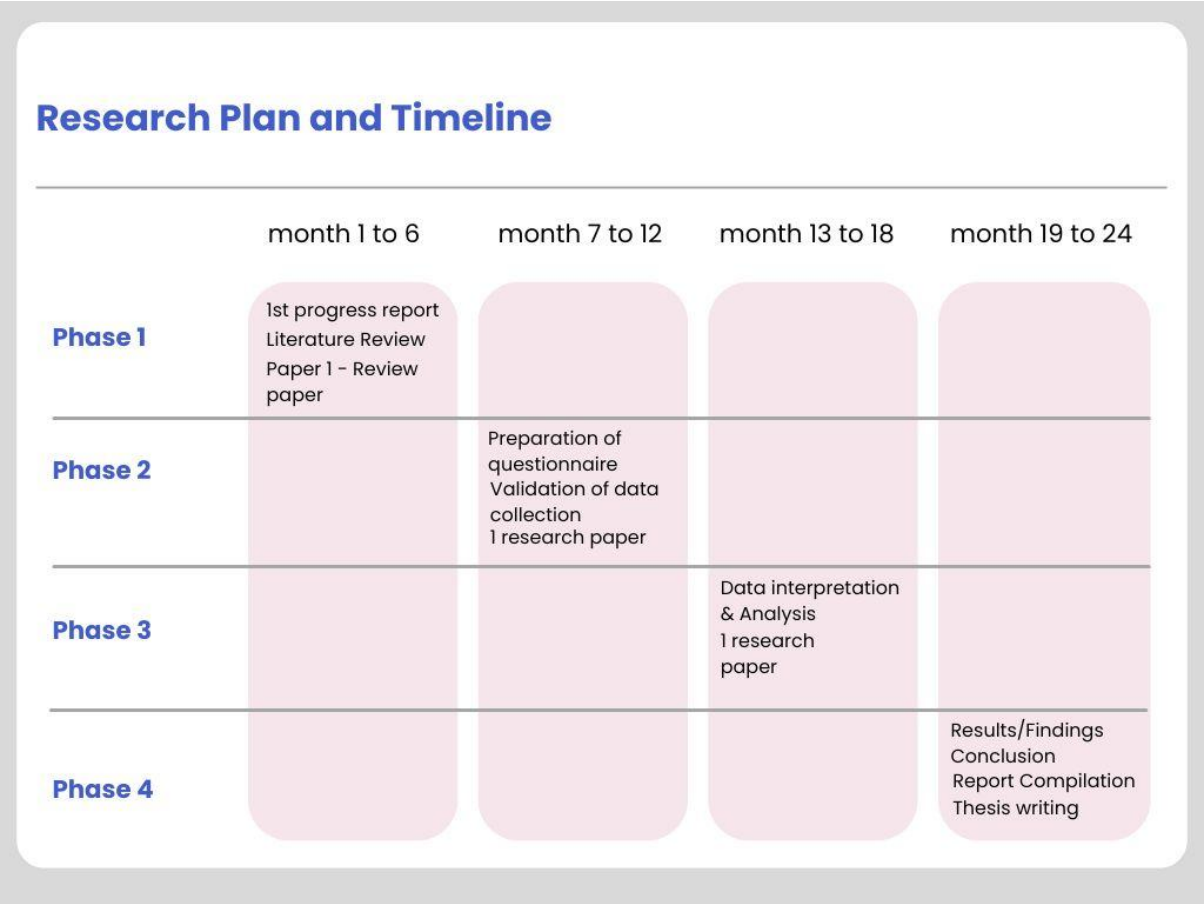
7. Limitation of the Study

- since the study revolves around only on the employers/recruiters' point of view, the results may be subjective. All the aspects of brand image for a Management institute in India may not be covered.
- The base of the study is primary data which is sourced through structured questionnaires. Therefore, there can be a chance of a poor comprehension or response bias.
- The study reflects and showcases employer perception only at a specific point in time, not over a period of time.

8. Expected Outcomes of the Study

- To develop a validated multi factor model to measure employer-perceived brand image for the management institutes in India.
- To help to develop focused strategies for institutional investment by ranking of brand-building factors based on evidence of their relative impact on brand image of the management institute.
- to help in enabling differentiated brand communication decisions by providing insights which are focused on Organization sector and size, into employers' preference of institutes.
- To provide insights and inputs on employer-centric quality indicators to ranking & accreditation bodies.
- To suggest strategies (with a brand scorecard tool) that are practical and can improve institutional brand value. This will enable benchmarking and monitoring of brand image with regards to expectations of the industry.

9. Research Timeline



References

- Santhosh Kumar, S., Shinde, S., & Khan, A. K. (2025). Industry–institute collaboration for transforming management education. Asian Education and Development Studies, 1–28.
- Rao, S., & Wadhwa, N. (2023). Rankings, accreditation, and employer perceptions: A multi-group analysis in Indian management education. Higher Education, 85(3), 611–631.
- Aaker, D. A. (1991). Managing Brand Equity: Capitalizing on the Value of a Brand Name. Free Press, New York.
- Whisman, R. (2009). Internal branding: A university's most valuable intangible asset. Journal of Product & Brand Management, 18(5), 367–370.

- Srivastava, P., & Bhatnagar, J. (2023). Employer brand equity of business schools: Scale development, validation, and predictors. International Journal of Human Resource Management, 34(12), 2404–2435.
- Moroko, L., & Uncles, M. D. (2008). Characteristics of successful employer brands. Journal of Brand Management, 16(3), 160–175.
- Kaur, H., & Nanda, P. (2022). Salary benchmarking and recruiter preferences: An analysis of placement data from 50 Indian B-schools. Vision: The Journal of Business Perspective, 26(4), 467–479.
- Verma, R., & Kapoor, D. (2021). Recruiter diversity vs. salary packages: Which placement metric most strongly predicts employer preference? Journal of Education and Work, 34(7), 724–740.
- Jain, V., Sharma, D., & Nanda, T. (2023). Internship quality as a mediator between institute brand and full-time hiring intent: Evidence from Indian corporations. Journal of Business Research, 156, 113524.
- Gupta, P., & Srivastava, R. K. (2022). Faculty credentials and employer perceptions of academic rigour: A mediation analysis. Higher Education Quarterly, 76(3), 567–584.
- Mishra, S., & Tiwari, R. (2023). Faculty industry experience and employer evaluation of graduate practical readiness: A SEM-based analysis. International Journal of Educational Management, 37(3), 589–605.
- Bhat, K., & Singh, R. (2023). Experiential learning and employer brand perception: A study of top-tier management institutes in India. Decision, 50(2), 145–162.
- Kumar, R., & Pandey, S. (2024). Digital curriculum integration and employer preference: Evidence from IT and consulting sector recruiters. Computers & Education, 196, 104743.
- Romero, E. J. (2022). AACSB accreditation: Addressing faculty sufficiency and sustainability issues. Academy of Management Learning & Education, 21(1), 123–139.
- Shankar, R., & Pillai, S. (2023). NIRF rankings and employer recruitment decisions: An empirical investigation. Economic and Political Weekly, 58(12), 45–52.

• Kumar, P., & Anand, N. (2022). Physical infrastructure and the employer's campus experience: A qualitative investigation in Tier-II Indian management institutes. Management and Labour Studies, 47(1), 45–67.

• Joshi, P., & Nair, S. (2023). Organisational size and campus recruitment behaviour: Contrasting strategies of SMEs and large corporates. International Journal of Human Resource Management, 34(8), 1624–1648.

• Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. Journal of Marketing, 57(1), 1–22.

• Hemsley-Brown, J., & Oplatka, I. (2006). Universities in a competitive global marketplace: A systematic review of the literature on higher education marketing. International Journal of Public Sector Management, 19(4), 316–338.

• Bhargava, S., & Sinha, B. (2022). Campus recruitment infrastructure and employer satisfaction: Evidence from B-schools in Northern India. IIMB Management Review, 34(3), 215–228.

• AICTE (2023). All India Council for Technical Education – Annual Report 2022-23. Ministry of Education, Government of India.

• AICTE (2024). AICTE National Employability Report – Management Graduates 2024. Government of India.

• Agarwal, N., & Mehta, P. (2022). Bridging the curriculum-industry gap in Indian management education: An employer perspective. Journal of Education and Work, 35(4), 392–410. https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080.2022.2056781

• Bhattacharya, M., & Das, A. (2023). Faculty research productivity vs. thought leadership: Which matters more to employers? Vikalpa, 48(1), 45–60.

• Fragueiro, F., & Thomas, H. (2011). Strategic Leadership in the Business School: Keeping One Step Ahead. Cambridge University Press.

*****